




***A Time To Remember  
Twenty-Seven Years  
At Oakdale Baptist Church***

**U.S. 64 East  
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Twenty-Seven Years  
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**Mildred J. Miller  
Certified Genealogist**



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# Acknowledgements

My sincere appreciation is expressed to the history committee and Oakdale for giving me the sacred trust of writing your first church history. You are to be commended for recording these early years which will probably be the most significant time in your history. You have told the story of how and why your church was organized and how it got where it is today, becoming a model for future generations to follow. All agree that it has flourished and grown at a phenomenal rate that none of you actually expected, but you also agree that it is only because God was truly in your midst as you seek to glorify Him and give Him the praise in all that you do.

There are several people at Oakdale that have made valuable contributions to this history. June Lippard, Velma Styers and Marie Bell provided photographs and newspaper clippings of early years, and we are grateful to them for these contributions.

All of you who came for interviews and that I called on the telephone, my sincere thanks to you for your help. The hours that I spent interviewing were memorable and special times for me. Thank you for sharing your past years at Oakdale with me. Your names are included in the bibliography.

To George and Elizabeth Weaver, I extend my appreciation for their financial support, and Elizabeth's assistance in getting records and pictures to me and for just being there to answer my questions were invaluable.

Your church officials have had the foresight to insure that your records will be preserved. The minutes and church membership are on microfilm in the Baptist Historical Collection in the library at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. where the church also has a file with items of historical value. We want to express appreciation to all who were responsible for the preservation of these records.

Mildred J. Miller, C.G.

# The Heritage Of Oakdale

The first Baptist church in the United States was founded in what became the state of Rhode Island under the leadership of Roger Williams who had fled from persecution in Massachusetts to that state in 1635. Other churches opened in the 1600's and 1700's, but there was little organization in any church in America before the Revolution. There was little significant growth in the Baptist Church until about 1800 after Baptists in North Carolina and southern Virginia had united their congregations into a body called the Kehukee Association.<sup>1</sup>

Baptists were moving into North Carolina in great numbers after 1740, concentrated in the eastern half of the state. One of their earliest churches in this area was Eaton's on Dutchman's Creek in what is now Davie County, the oldest Baptist church in the upper Yadkin River Valley.<sup>2</sup> Its origin was in the early fall of 1772 with ten charter members under the leadership of Rev. William Cook who was from Old Fishing Creek Church in Warren County, North Carolina. Daniel Boone and his family were also among Eaton's first members.

These primitive meetinghouses were built from large logs cut from the adjoining forest. The floors were dirt, packed hard similar to the earliest one room log cabins which provided shelter for the pioneers in frontier days. Benches which were made from split logs had no backs and became very uncomfortable during the long sermons that sometimes lasted for several hours. Windows had no glass, but there were shutters that could be opened to let in light and cool breezes during the summer and closed against the cold winds during the winter.<sup>3</sup>

Baptist were not organized in Iredell County until after the Revolutionary War. Grassy Knob, which is near the line between Wilkes and Iredell counties, was organized in 1789, the year after Iredell was created from Rowan County. It is located at the foot of a small mountain for which it was named.<sup>4</sup> William Petty, a Baptist missionary, and Lazarus Whitehead, who became their first pastor, were leaders from Flat Rock Church in Yadkin County. Other churches soon followed, but growth was slow until revivals in the late 1840's doubled memberships in existing churches, and new churches were organized.<sup>5</sup>

Early churches were conservative. Their leaders were strong preachers, but they were mostly uneducated. There is little evidence that they were paid for their preaching during the Back Country period. What they lacked in education, they made up in faith and dedication with many serving the same congregation for many years. There is some indication that many of their preachers were tenant farmers, living where church work was active, leaving them free to move on to another work when the



time came.

The earliest extant Baptist records for this county are usually found in the detailed minutes of the Saturday meetings kept by the clerks. The church exercised a firm control over the lives of their members, and offenders and backsliders were often excluded from the fellowship of the church. These minutes give an insight into the lives of not only the Baptists but people in general. Their sins were not too different from the ones that are common in our society. However, the offenses that received the most attention were not sins of the flesh, as one might expect, but sins of the spirit, those actions that tended to destroy the fellowship within the church. Every effort was made to restore good will among the brethren in those cases that can so easily break up a church.

The first Baptist congregation in Statesville was organized in 1875, after Rev. J.B. Boone, a Baptist minister, preached about once a month at the courthouse. When other Baptist churches grew up in the industrial sections of the city, this group became known as the First Baptist Church, which is now located on Davie Avenue. At that time, it was at the corner of Broad and Tradd streets.

Baptists were in the forefront in ministering to the mill employees in Statesville. In early 1894, they established a mission in the neighborhood of Statesville Development Co. and Statesville Cotton Mill. Out of this mission grew Western Avenue Baptist Church which was organized in 1901.<sup>6</sup>

This was the beginning of a denomination that has reached monumental growth county-wide, state-wide and nation-wide in a little over two centuries. From its humble birth in the Back Country of America and, finally North Carolina, the Baptist denomination has become one of the leading churches in the country.



## II

# Oakdale's First Year

Oakdale Baptist Church can trace its roots back to those early Baptists who organized the first church in Statesville in 1875. It was this congregation that became First Baptist Church and that began a mission at Bloomfield in West Statesville about twenty five years later when the cotton industry caused rapid growth in the population in that area. The first Sunday School was conducted in an old public schoolhouse that stood on the Taylorsville Road, four or five blocks from the present location of Front Street Baptist Church<sup>1</sup>.

The mission flourished in the community that had become known as Bloomfield, and Brown's Memorial Baptist Church was organized on September 1, 1911, named in honor of George H. Brown. Mr. Brown declined the honor of having the church named for him, and it then became known as Front Street Baptist Church. After fifty years of providing spiritual leadership for the people in the West Statesville community, Front Street became the mother of another mission, just as First Baptist Church had nurtured her birth and early development.

Baptists living on farms and along Highway 64 traveled to Statesville and all the way across town to worship at Front Street or one of the other Baptist churches in Statesville. It is the dream of all Christians to have a church in their community to become an integral part of their lives, and these people, who were content in their church relationships at Front Street, were nonetheless ready to take steps to see this vision become a reality.

The North Carolina Baptist Convention has recognized the potential for the success of a new congregation east of Statesville. As early as 1955, the State Mission Secretary conferred with Rev. Elmer Thomas, who was serving as the Director of Associational Missions, asking him what they were planning to do for this area. Mr. Thomas had talked with other Baptists in the community, as well as to the officials at Front Street, because he was fully aware that "planned churches go better." Everyone agreed that the field was fertile so an advisory body was appointed to help bring the church into being. Serving on this council were: Rev. Thomas Reese, pastor of Front Street; P.M. Johnson; Harvie L. Brewington; Dr. John Skyes; Paul McAlpin; Thomas King; Dr. E.L. Spivey; Clarence Gwaltney; Rev. Elmer Thomas; and Lee Fincannon. Some of the key men from the community who were involved in the initial planning included: Jim Mize, Zeno Proctor, Bill Murdock, Oren Bost, Roy Jurney, Bob Summers and Richard Williams.

One of the first steps that was taken by this energetic, dedicated group

was to do a survey in the community to see what kind of support they would have. Response was far beyond the expectations of any of them. Mr. Reece made arrangements for them to use the American Legion Building off Highway 64 for a new mission Sunday School. Front Street sponsored the mission in cooperation with the South Yadkin Baptist Association, so this venture was not a haphazard move made by a handful of disgruntled people.

According to Rev. Elmer Thomas, "circumstances unfolded with the plan," a statement that has been repeated by many of the men and women who were so faithful to Oakdale in those early days. Almost immediately, they were offered property with a low down payment. The missions committee went to Dr. E.L. Spivey, the State Mission Board Secretary with three requests: a lot gift, a loan and assistance to pay the pastor's salary. Dr. Spivey later commented, "From the sincerity of that man's soul and the work in that field, I had to give my sanction."

## **Oakdale Mission Organized**

An organizational meeting was held at the home of Zeno and Rose Proctor on January 5, 1961. According to the men who have known him best and who worked by his side during these early days, "Zeno had a vision of a church in that community." It is obvious that his vision was shared by others as well.

At their first meeting, the name "Oakdale Baptist Mission" was chosen. Rev. Thomas Reese, their pastor at Front Street for a little over a year, opened the meeting with a devotional based on John 4:27-42 and a congregational song, "Wonderful Words of Life." The first order of business was the election of officers as follows: Gary Mize, clerk; Jim Mize, treasurer; Bill Murdock, nominating committee chairman with Zeno Proctor, a member of the committee; and Reda Journey, a custodian for January. Mrs. Bill Murdock was elected to be the general secretary. The group accepted Mr. Reese's offer to serve as their pastor, and he then explained their relationship to Front Street Church.

On January 8, 1961, only three days after the organizational meeting, forty persons attended Sunday School. By the end of the month, the number had increased to sixty with sixty three persons attending the morning worship service. Prospects for the success of the mission were so good that four weeks later, they bought the F.N. Beaver home at the intersection of Highway 64 and the River Hill Road for \$13,500. The first service was held there on January 29, 1961. The church minutes noted that this was the "first Sunday in our own place of worship. We are all happy to be here." Sunday School was under the direction of Zeno Proctor, the superintendent elected by Front Street Church.

The nominating committee made a report at this meeting, electing the

following officers who served in the first year of the church's history: Gary Mize, clerk; J.A. Mize, treasurer; Bill Murdock, historian; Hugh Welborn, minister of music; Bill Murdock, Mrs. Roy Journey and Zeno Proctor, nominating committee; Mrs. Gene Lippard, chairman of church nursery; Roy Journey, Zeno Proctor and Gene Lippard, property committee; Richard Williams and Oren Bost, teller; and Bill Styers and Larry Connell, ushers.

### **First Sunday School Leaders**

Zeno Proctor was elected to serve as the first general Sunday School superintendent. Mrs. Bill Murdock was the general secretary, and Mrs. Roy Journey, enrollment secretary. Department superintendents were: Mrs. Zeno Proctor, nursery; Mrs. Bill Styers, beginners; Mrs. Roy Journey, primary; Bill Styers, juniors; Gary Mize, intermediates; and Bill Murdock, young people. J.A. Mize was the adult men's teacher, and Mrs. Paul Holder was the adult women's teacher. Workers in the children's department were: Mrs. Richard Williams, Mrs. Larry Connell, Ann Summers and June Lippard.

### **A Solid Financial Beginning**

The Beaver place was financed with a gift of \$1,500 from the South Yadkin Baptist Association; a gift of \$2,500 and a loan of \$2,500 from the Baptist State Convention; and a loan of \$8,500 borrowed for the mission by Front Street Church. Oakdale Mission adopted their first budget as follows: \$4,350 for local expenses, \$650 for Association expenses, and \$1,500 for the loan from the Baptist State Convention, a total budget of \$6,500 with a weekly requirement of \$125 to meet these obligations.

### **Rev. Joe T. Whitworth Called**

With encouragement and financial assistance from Front Street and financial assistance from the State Convention, Oakdale made plans to call their first full-time pastor. On March 26, 1961, the congregation voted unanimously to call Rev. Joe Whitworth of Lenoir to serve as their pastor, his salary to be supplemented by the State Convention with the pastor to furnish his own home. On May 1, Mr. Whitworth assumed his duties as pastor of Oakdale mission.

### **Beaver Home Renovated**

Plans were made in April to make some changes in the Beaver house to make it better suited for the needs of the mission. The assembly room was enlarged by removing a partition and tearing down a chimney. With

a more spacious auditorium, draperies were hung, adding beauty to the worship area and enhancing the acoustics.

### **Additional Officers and New Plans**

Additional officers were elected at the first meeting in May which was conducted by the new pastor, Rev. Joe Whitworth. Bill Murdock was added to the mission committee and Paul Holder to the nominating committee. The mission had made good progress, and with the help of their first pastor, they wasted no time in planning for the church's future growth.

As attendance increased, Oakdale found that they would need additional space much earlier than any of them had anticipated. Building plans were presented to the congregation on May 21, 1961, less than six months after the mission's organization. After the presentation, there was a unanimous vote to accept the plans. On the pastor's recommendation, the congregation decided to use the offering every fourth week for the building fund.

On August 20, 1961, Cecil Bell, Paul Holder and J.A. Roper were elected to the Board of Deacons. With authorization from the congregation their first official act was to secure a loan from First Savings and Loan in Statesville for \$20,000 to pay off the balance of the indebtedness on the land and complete the new church building, land consisting of four acres, known as the John Q. Carter home tract. In November, Oakdale received a gift of \$1,000 which was applied to the loan.

For a young congregation, the mission's finances were in good order at the end of the first year. To further insure a sound financial status, the pastor requested that his salary be cut and that his raise be used as a housing allowance.

### **Piano and Communion Set Purchased**

The dedication of a people to their church is exemplified at a conference held on September 10 following the worship service. The question put before the people was quickly answered. A piano could be purchased for \$225, and a communion set and collection plates for \$65, making a total of \$290. In the spirit already shown by these people, the motion was not only approved, but pledges were also made in the amount of \$295 to pay for these items. Several members remember the trip to get the piano on an icy, winter day. You can read about this in the chapter, "A Time To Remember."

### **The End of the First Year**

The pastor and his family moved into the house on the church

property that was also used as a temporary place of worship. Minor changes had been made to convert the upstairs into an apartment to insure the family's comfort and privacy. There were advantages to having such an arrangement, but there must have been some disadvantages as well.

By the end of the year, it was obvious that Oakdale was strong and still growing. In one short year, the mission had become a vital part of the community and was attracting new families who were becoming members of the church. Leadership was strong, and members were dedicated. The budget that was adopted for 1962 was almost doubled, requiring weekly offerings of \$225. It reflected a well balanced budget, allowing proportionately for a strong local program, including music and youth ministries, and an equally strong outreach program which included missions. The final Sunday School report for the year showed substantial growth from the first enrollment of 34 in January. In six months, it had increased to 77, and by the end of the year, the superintendent reported an average monthly attendance of 93 with an enrollment of 154.

So ended the first year in the history of Oakdale Mission.



### III

## Oakdale Baptist Church

On January 7, 1962 at 3:00 in the afternoon, one year after their first meeting at the American Legion building, Oakdale Baptist Mission officially became Oakdale Baptist Church. Names of 97 persons who came to the mission by letter were read by their pastor, Rev. Joe T. Whitworth. They presented themselves to the officials, and after the adoption of the Articles of Faith, as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Church Covenant, they were declared to be Oakdale Baptist Church by the council which was called for the purpose of organization. The new church voted that "those persons coming in 30 days and uniting with the new church would be considered charter members".

Charter members received January 7, 1962 were as follows:

Cecil A. Bell	Miss Nancy Holton
Mrs. Cecil A. Bell (Sarah)	Miss Wanda Holton
Miss Dianne Bell	Waldo Hoots
Rex Bell	Mrs. Waldo Hoots (Nona)
Woodrow Bell	Luther Forbes
Mrs. Woodrow Bell (Marie)	Boyd Jarvis
Keith Bell	Mrs. Boyd Jarvis (Eloise)
Oren Bost	Roy Journey
Mrs. Oren Bost (Margaret)	Mrs. Roy Journey (Reda)
Miss Betty Anne Bost	Miss Sheila B. Journey
Carl M. Bush	Steven Knox
Larry Connell	Gene Lippard
Mrs. Larry Connell	Mrs. Gene Lippard (June)
Mrs. Luther DeHart (Arlene)	Miss Wanda Kay Little
Miss Janet Sue DeHart	Herman Meredith
Miss Joanne DeHart	Mrs. Herman Meredith (Fern)
Miss Brenda DeHart	James A. Mize
Albert Eudy	Mrs. James A. Mize (Lucy)
Mrs. Albert Eudy (Elsie)	Dwight Mize
Mrs. Nannie Fann	Gary Mize
Bill Holland	Mrs. Gary Mize (Linda)
Mrs. Bill Holland (Rachel)	Sam Nelson
Don Holton	Mrs. Sam Nelson
Mrs. Don Holton (Selene)	Mrs. Bill Pierce (Lillian)
Marian Holton	Zeno Proctor

S. Craig Holton  
 Mrs. S. Craig Holton  
 Geraldine Holton  
 Rodney Roberts  
 Mrs. Rodney Roberts (Phyliss)  
 J.A. Roper  
 Mrs. J.A. Roper (Sally)  
 Jack Sigmon  
 Mrs. Jack Sigmon (Margaret)  
 Thomas H. Stikeleather  
 Mrs. Thomas H. Stikeleather  
 (Audrey)  
 Stanley Stikeleather  
 Bill Styers  
 Mrs. Bill Styers (Jo)  
 J.M. Styers  
 Mrs. J.M. Styers (Velma)  
 Bobby Styers  
 Johnny N. Styers  
 Everette Wayne Summers  
 Russell L. Summers  
 Mrs. Russell Summers  
 Mrs. W.E. Summers  
 Miss Ann B. Summers

Mrs. Zeno Proctor (Rose)  
 Miss Martha Sue Rash  
 Mrs. W.F.A. Rash  
 Miss Shirley M. Summers  
 S.G. Swann  
 Mrs. S.G. Swann (Lois)  
 Miss Alice Turner  
 Arnold Turner  
 Mrs. Bonnie Waters  
 Miss Patricia Watson  
 George B. Weaver  
  
 Mrs. George B. Weaver (Elizabeth)  
 Richard C. Williams  
 Mrs. Richard C. Williams (Ruth)  
 Miss Linda Sue Williams  
 Miss Brenda Williams  
 Hiram Williams  
 Marie Williams  
 Rev. Joe T. Whitworth  
 Mrs. Joe T. Whitworth (Elizabeth)  
 Miss Cathy Whitworth  
 Miss Francine Whitworth  
 Billy Icenhour  
 Mrs. Billy Icenhour (Eileen)

### **The First Year As A Church**

American and Christian flags and 100 new Broadman Hymnal with shaped notes were bought to begin this year. Five tables and twenty-four chairs were added to the Sunday School area. Other equipment and furniture were bought during the year, and improvements were made to the church grounds.

### **The First Vacation Bible School**

In March, plans were made for the first daily Vacation Bible School. It was staffed by the following teachers: Rev. Joe T. Whitworth, superintendent; Mrs. Linda Mize, secretary; Mrs. Zeno Proctor, Mrs. Waldo Hoots and Mrs. Herman Meridith, nursery; Mrs. Don Holton, Mrs. Bill Styers and Mrs. S.G. Swann, beginners; Mrs. Reda Journey, Mrs. Dan Kay and Mrs. Woodrow Bell, primary; Mrs. Audrey Stikeleather, Mrs. June Lippard and Miss Patricia Watson, juniors; Mrs. Rodney Roberts and Rev. Joe Whitworth, intermediates. Mrs. J.M. Styers and Mrs. C.A. Bell were in charge of refreshments.



## **Outreach Program in 1962**

Oakdale has had a strong outreach program from its first year. In May, a complete census was taken in the community in connection with a program of visitation. One canvass was made in the Wilkesboro Road area to locate prospective members, also considering the possibility of beginning a new mission in that area. On a recommendation from the Board of Deacons, the church purchased 100 New Testaments from the American Bible Society to be used by the pastor in his "soul-winning ministry." This practice was continued, and additional Testaments have been bought as needed.

### **South Yadkin Baptist Association**

Oakdale elected a committee of seven members, representing all areas of church work, to meet with a committee from the South Yadkin Association at Western Avenue Baptist Church on September 7, 1962 with an application for admission to the Association. Those who attended were: Mrs. George Weaver, Dan Kay, Jr., C.A. Bell, Zeno Proctor, Jim Mize, W.O. Bell and Mrs. Don Holton. At the time of the meeting, membership had increased to 132 with a Sunday School enrollment of 170, Training Union 55, and W.M.U. 40.

### **Program Coordinated With Other Activities**

The local church continued with plans to become better organized so that their activities would have as few conflicts as possible with community, Associational, State and Southern Baptist events. To coordinate the local church program, a council was set up to assist the pastor in planning a calendar in advance to help local officials set up their schedules. For the convenience of church leaders and the congregation, the first church directory was also approved and printed about the same time. Oakdale's success has been a result of such planning, allowing her people to fulfill their obligations to the community, and leaving them more time to serve God and their church to the fullest.

### **The Last Months of 1962**

Additional officers were named toward the end of the first year. C.A. Bell, Zeno Proctor and Oren Bost were elected to serve on the pulpit committee on October 28, 1962. George Weaver and Boyd Jarvis were also elected to the Board of Deacons at the same time.

During the latter two months of the year, Oakdale showed a renewed interest in the outreach program which was initiated at the beginning of

the year. The congregation doubled their contributions for Associational Missions and began a mission at Rose Lynn Nursing Home in the Cool Springs community. Rev. S.G. Swann, a retired minister and one of the church's members, was in charge of the service which began on December 2, 1962. The church began providing Christian literature and Sunday School quarterlies for residents of the home.

## **IV**

# **Second Year at Oakdale Baptist Church**

Oakdale began the year in 1963 with plans to enter the second phase of their building program to meet the needs of their rapidly growing congregation. One of the key committees appointed for the year was the building committee with the following members: Cecil Bell, Waldo Hoots, J.M. Styers, Don Holton, Oren Bost, Jack Sigmon and Roy Jurney. Their responsibility was to make a study of the cost of the new sanctuary with estimates of materials from at least three suppliers. The committee reported in March, and ten days later the congregation gave a vote of confidence to the building project, voting 86 to seven to continue the program.

### **Additional Officers**

There were a few additions and changes noted in the officers from the previous year as follows: Mrs. Boyd Jarvis, historian; Mr. and Mrs. Don Holton, Lord's Supper; Reece Childers and J.A. Roper, music; George Weaver, church trustee; George Weaver, Sunday School superintendent; Mrs. S.G. Swann and Mrs. John Sherrill, Ladies Bible Class; Jim Mize, intermediate superintendent and boys' teacher with Mrs. Paul Holder as the girls' teacher; Mrs. George Gregory, primary training union; and Mrs. Albert Eudy, beginners' department teacher. Most of the other leaders returned to their respective positions.

Early in the year, church officials with assistance from the State Baptist Convention of North Carolina began a library to provide books and film strips to be used in the church's Christian education department. Mrs. Sally White was elected to serve as the first librarian.

### **Vacation Bible School**

At the beginning of their second year, the Vacation Bible School staff was selected primarily from among the regular teachers, and they immediately began making plans for another successful school. Every effort was made to reach as many children as possible in the community. Early in her history, Oakdale began placing Christian education and training for children and youth as one of the church's top priorities.

## **Associate Pastor Called**

Oakdale voted to call A.A. Smith, a member of Oakdale, as assistant pastor after his ordination on October 5, 1963. Rev. Elmer Thomas examined and recommended Mr. Smith as a candidate for ordination. On a motion by Paul Barnes to accept his recommendation, the congregation voted to accept it. Rev. Jimmy Steele, pastor of Faith Baptist Church, brought the charge to the candidate and the church. The message, "A Man Called of God," was delivered by the pastor, Rev. Joe T. Whitworth. Mr. Smith received a Bible which was presented by Rev. Elmer Thomas with instructions from him "to read it, to teach it and to preach it, as it is the only way to Salvation." The service was concluded with the prayer of dedication led by Rev. Lester Beckham of Cochran Street Baptist Church and the "laying on hands" by the deacons and pastors of the churches that were represented.

In less than six months, Mr. Smith answered a call to accept the pastorate of Zebulon Baptist Church at Taylorsville. His resignation was reluctantly accepted on January 10, 1964, to become effective immediately.

## **Junior Deacons**

Several young men at Oakdale were selected to become part of a group that was known as Junior Deacons. The Deacons had adopted a proposal presented by George Weaver to organize and train these young men to become future leaders of the church. Although they had no voting privileges, they met on invitation with the Board of Deacons. In preparation for their leadership, they had their own monthly meetings and studied the book, "Duties of Deacons."

## **The Search for a New Pastor Begins**

As 1964 drew to a close, Oakdale began plans for the new year. Priority was given to filling the pulpit. Rev. Joe Whitworth had provided over three years of strong spiritual leadership for the new church. He had guided his people through their first year as a mission and two years as a young church that saw phenomenal growth in membership and acceptance in the Oakdale community. He has also given them support and encouragement through two phases of a long-term building program. Now it was time to find another man who was ready to meet the challenges presented by a rapidly growing congregation who wanted to continue to reach as many people as possible.

On November 1, 1964, the following pulpit committee was elected: W.O. Bell (chairman), Don Holton, Zeno Proctor, Mrs. Elizabeth Weaver and Mrs. S.G. Swann. At the same time, C.A. Bell was appointed to secure a supply pastor until a new pastor was called and could assume his duties.



# V

## 1965-1976

Oakdale began the new year in 1965 with "their house in order." On January 10, the church called Rev. Latt Beshears of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Charlotte to become their pastor. During the next ten years, emphasis was placed on reaching more people for Christ, adult and children, in the community. Social issues affecting the morals of the larger community were also addressed. One of the first projects that was initiated by the new pastor was the publication of a monthly newsletter with the first issue released in May. It served as a means of reaching all the people, keeping them informed about activities in all phases of the church's programs and allowing them to plan their schedules. This had been a concern of the leaders from the beginning: keeping church members and the community informed so that there would be as few conflicts with community events as possible. Oakdale is also a civic minded church.

### **Music Directors**

In February 1967, Paul Barnes assumed the duties of the adult choir director, and Reece Childers became the youth choir director. Both agreed to serve in their respective positions without compensation until such time as it was considered wise to hire a director for the music department. Boyd Jarvis, Mrs. Clarence White, Jr. and Mrs. C.A. Bell served on the music committee during this time. Mrs. Bell was the first regular pianist, a position that she held several years.

### **Enlargement Campaign**

There had been a steady growth in Sunday School since the Sunday in January in 1961 when the people met at Zeno Proctor's for the first time. Attendance had averaged something like fifty per cent of the enrollment which is considered to be average, but Oakdale's goal from the beginning has been to move forward. The church supported the Association Enlargement Campaign which began in the local church in October 1965.

In April, before the campaign was launched, the Sunday School enrollment was 238 with an average attendance of 126. This number was increased by eleven in June. Superintendent George Weaver reported a steady increase throughout 1965 and by December, the number had climbed to 264. Growth was not as rapid in 1966, but there was a noted

improvement in the average attendance. Also there were more who regularly brought their Bibles to church.

Another plan that was used to create more interest in Sunday School was the Blue Star System. To qualify as a Blue Star Class, the class had to meet certain standards set up by the leaders. There had to be fifty percent of the enrollment present for Sunday School with fifty five percent of these staying for the worship service. Class members were required to make three personal contacts and nine telephone or written contacts each month. As a result there was some growth noted which soon leveled off; however, there was a gradual increase in attendance, showing a greater personal commitment.

### **Improvements**

During 1966, improvements were made to the church grounds, clearing out trees that were not needed in preparation for fall seeding and trimming trees that were to be left. In addition to the outside work, improvements were made in the Sunday School rooms. The work continued throughout the winter, providing a time of close fellowship among the people as they worked together.

After months of sitting on folding metal chairs, the congregation felt that the time had come to look for used pews for the temporary sanctuary. A committee was selected to see what was available. After looking at some that were not suitable for their needs, Sally and Clarence White and George and Elizabeth Weaver spent their July 4th holiday to go to eastern Carolina to see some pews and pulpit furniture.

Upon their arrival at the Baptist Church at St. Paul's, they located the man in charge of selling the used pews and were taken to a tobacco barn. The pews were stored in the second story of the barn with a ladder built up the side of the building. After climbing the ladder, they found that the 30 pine pews and three pulpit chairs with pulpit stand looked to be just what they needed. The church decided to purchase the furniture, and once again Roy Journey sent one of his transfer trucks to deliver their first real church furnishings to Oakdale. The arrangement proved to be convenient, because Roy's truck provided storage at the church until the time came to furnish their sanctuary a day or so later.

The pews were handmade by a man at the St. Paul' church and served well until the new sanctuary was built. They were then sold to another church for the same price Oakdale had paid.

### **Social Issues**

In 1967, Oakdale Church joined other Christians in the county to formally oppose a bill being considered by the State Legislature which would legalize liquor-by-the-drink or "Brown-Bagging." The Deacons

wrote a letter to Homer Tolbert, Iredell County Representative, and to the Speaker of the House, urging individual members to also write to voice their opposition. Both men wrote in response to the letters, expressing their appreciation and assuring them that they would oppose such legislation.

### **Resignation of Rev. Latt Beshears**

After almost four years as pastor of Oakdale, Rev. Latt Beshears submitted his letter of resignation on December 15, 1968 with his resignation to become effective on January 12. His new work was Superintendent of Missions in LaGrange, Georgia.

### **Rev. Norman Joyner**

True to their tradition, the people lost no time in finding leadership for their church. On January 1, 1969, they took a decisive step to begin their new year by voting unanimously to call Rev. Norman Joyner, former pastor of Troutman Baptist Church, to serve as interim pastor. Although he had only recently been elected to the State Senate, he agreed to be available for both Sunday services and limited visits to the sick on Saturday and Monday and for emergency needs. In the meantime, a pulpit committee was appointed to secure a full-time pastor. Those who served on it were: Don Holton, L.P. Bell, Mrs. H.T. Davis and Mr. and Mrs. Zeno Proctor.

After Mr. Joyner had served as interim pastor for more than a year, Oakdale voted to call him to serve as their full-time pastor. The call was made on April 20, 1969 to become effective at the expiration of his term in the Senate. Meanwhile, he continued to serve as interim pastor.

Shortly after Mr. Joyner assumed his duties as full-time pastor, the church sent him to Tokoyo, Japan for the Baptist World Alliance in July 1970. He used his vacation time for the trip. Meanwhile, exciting reports were coming from George Weaver, the Sunday School Superintendent, who reported a sixty-eight percent average attendance in the department. Special emphasis had been placed on a telephone census of the community for the past two years, and results were being seen.

A bus ministry was used for a short time in 1973, but the high cost of its operation soon made it prohibitive.

### **Community and Church Fellowship**

The church was firmly established with several building programs behind them. About 1969, the people began to expand on their outreach program. In October, the congregation sponsored a Blood Mobile Visit to Oakdale Church. The next year, a Thanksgiving Dinner was held with



an emphasis placed on inviting lonely persons, senior citizens and any others who enjoyed warm, Christian fellowship.

Oakdale people recall their heritage with deep feeling, remembering the strong, close ties among them. And there came the time when they wanted to share this Christian love with those around them, near and far. The Sunday School classes maintained a clothes closet and food pantry to meet the needs of their neighbors who lived nearby, and they, as a church with the help of the W.M.U., contributed generously to World Missions to help the ones who were afar. Not only were they aware of the physical needs of their brethren, but they also remembered their spiritual needs when they supported the church's mission work and the Gideons who provided Bibles all over the world.

Recognizing the moral and physical dangers of alcohol, Oakdale made a contribution to an organization opposing the A.B.C. store in Statesville.

This organization was actively involved in its opposition during the election to determine if the county would have liquor-by-the-drink.

Not all has been work! Work has been combined with good food and clean fun. March 18, 1978 was set aside as a day of clean-up and fellowship at the church. The workday ended with a covered-dish supper and fish cooked by Steve Johnson at the evening meal. In June another workday ended with a hamburger and ice cream supper. The church leaders recognized the value of such fellowship and recommended that similar events be considered quarterly.

### **Resignation of Pastor**

Rev. Norman Joyner served as pastor at Oakdale until February 13, 1977. At that time he moved to Bethel Baptist Church at Bethel, North Carolina, after serving as pastor of Oakdale for eight years. He was succeeded by Rev. Carroll Jordan who was interim pastor for more than a year. Mr. Jordan is a minister and Iredell County School Principal. He and his family are members of Oakdale and have made a real contribution to the church. He has filled the pulpit on many occasions and his wife, Carolyn Tolbert Jordan, has taught in the youth department of the church.

# VI

## The Past Decade

Oakdale began the search for a new full-time pastor during Rev. Carroll Jordon's interim pastorate when a pulpit committee was appointed on October 9, 1977. Serving with Oren Bost, the chairman, were: Carol Hendrix, Elizabeth Weaver, Michael Fox and Steve Johnson. Mrs. Bost was replaced by Ray Jones in March 1978 when he resigned due to health problems and family illness. On August 13, 1978, the church called Rev. John Richard Booth, a graduate of Southeastern Seminary at Wake Forest, to become their pastor. He came to Oakdale from Sperring Memorial Baptist Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

### Sunday School Highlights

Records show that there had been a decline in Sunday School enrollment for several years. An increase was noted about 1978, and records from 1979-1980 show a marked increase with excellent attendance.

Special emphasis has been put on Sunday School from time to time. In 1985, the superintendent began a series of events and reminded students and teachers of the importance of personal contact. At the beginning of the year, all classes were asked to contact and visit absent members, as well as prospective members. High Attendance Day was held on September 29. By that time attendance had reached sixty four percent of the enrollment. Oakdale owes much of its growth to goals such as this set by the leaders.

### Other Special Events

Oakdale continued to assist in community endeavors as they had done in the first ten years. The church supported the Spiritual Growth Crusade held in Statesville on September 16-20 in 1978, as well as other local programs in their community.

In October 1978, a church council was set up to relieve the deacons of some responsibility that could be assumed by others, leaving them time for more pressing duties. The council was made up of representatives from all areas of the church to share ideas and schedule events so that the mission of the church could be carried out more effectively. The group met monthly.

## **Pastor Attends Counseling School**

The pastor was granted leave from April 14-May 23 in 1980 to attend a counseling school. His service as Oakdale's pastor ended with his resignation on December 14, 1980 to become effective February 1, 1981. Mr. Booth resigned to receive a commission as Chaplain in the U.S. Air Force. He was endorsed by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and serves as a home missionary as Air Force Chaplain. Although he and his family moved to Sheppard Air Force Base, Wichita Falls, Texas on February 2, 1981, they have remained members of Oakdale Church.

The pastor selection committee under the leadership of W.E. Lazenby, chairman, immediately began the search for a new pastor. Serving with him were: Mark Johnson, Kristy Proctor, Audrey Stikeleather, Elizabeth Weaver and Gene Whitesides. In a short time, they presented the name of Rev. Charles Lee Hutchins to the congregation, and he was called to begin his work on June 1, 1981.

## **Church Expresses Concern**

In 1984, Oakdale expressed concern and compassion, along with others in Iredell County, regarding serious accidents and deaths in the county. The accidents, resulting in several deaths, occurred at the repair and construction sites of I-77 and I-40 intersections in Statesville. Church officials, on behalf of the members, made contact with the proper officials, asking them to help alleviate the dangerous situation that existed at the construction sites. At the same time, contributions were made to relieve world hunger through the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

## **Special Study**

Pastor Charles Hutchens taught a study on History and heritage in January and February as a part of his work for his doctor of ministries degree. Such studies bring about increased awareness and appreciation for contributions made by past generations and a better understanding of oneself and problems in our day.

## **Van Ministry**

The church had used a bus ministry earlier, but cost of operation and insurance caused it to be discontinued after a short period of use. After some discussion and investigation, it appeared that a van ministry was better suited to the church's needs. For the next two years, the van was

used for the youth and others at Oakdale. Its use was discontinued in August 1987. Proceeds were used to lease or rent a van when the need arose, which proved to be more cost efficient and more practical.

### **Scout Troops**

There are active Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops sponsored by the church with members serving as leaders. These organizations are considered to be a good ministry to the community.

### **Twenty-fifth Anniversary**

Oakdale's Silver Anniversary Celebration was held on January 26, 1986 with Mr. Gene Puckett, editor of the **Biblical Recorder** as guest speaker. There was a covered dish lunch with former members attending. The history of church music - 1961-1986 - was given by Gary Alexander.

### **Pastor Resigns**

Dr. Charles Hutchens, the pastor, submitted his resignation at the morning worship service to become effective April 30, 1986. He had accepted a call to become pastor of First Baptist Church at Rural Hall, North Carolina. Michael Scruggs, Ed Inman and Gail Lowe were appointed to secure an interim pastor to fill the pulpit. The following persons were named to serve on the Pastor Search Committee: Rex Bell, Steve Johnson, Mrs. Rhod Lowe, Mrs. Gar Hendrix and Mrs. Don Wall with Gene Whitesides as an alternate member.

Rev. Rod Lawson from the School of Pastoral Care at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem was called on June 8, 1986 to serve as interim pastor. He served in this capacity until September 14, 1986 when Dale Ellis assumed the position.

### **Report on Hunger in County**

There was an increased awareness locally of human needs during the past few years. Don Wall, director of Social Services in Iredell County and an Oakdale member, was invited by the deacons to tell about the needs in this county and what his department is doing to meet these needs. Some are being met, according to Mr. Wall, by the Soup Kitchen, Yokefellow and other agencies who need volunteers and donations of food badly. The church collected donations of food and took it to Yokefellow to help relieve hunger in Iredell County. Arrangements were made to receive contributions regularly.

Other smaller groups in the church began searching for persons who needed help. The Baptist Young Women adopted a lady in a rest home and began buying her medication. They also contributed medical supplies to Jubilee House for its ministry to abused and battered women and children.



## VII

# Pastorate of Rev. Mark A. Tilley

On November 24, 1986, Rev. Mark A. Tilley became the pastor of Oakdale Baptist Church. He received his B.A. Degree in Religion from Gardner-Webb College and Master of Divinity Degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at Wake Forest. Before accepting the pastorate at Oakdale, he was pastor of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church at State Road.

One of Mr. Tilley's first programs was in outreach which involved the entire church with Barry Redmond serving as Outreach Coordinator. Several other areas are in the planning stages, and several have been implemented in the past year.

The Brotherhood has been reactivated and is doing well under the leadership of co-directors Karl Johnson and Wilson Ruth. One of their projects has been the adoption of a cottage at South Mountain Baptist Camp for renovation which is actually done by the men. The Young Baptist Women who have been inactive have become active in recent months, providing opportunities for young women for 35 to 40. They are a part of the Women's Missionary Union which is an influential part of any Baptist congregation.

Oakdale has also begun a Singles Ministry in the past year to reach separated, divorced and older unmarrieds. The group meets for Bible Study on Sunday morning and is responsible for planning their fellowship. The church and its pastor sees this area as a great potential for service, filling a void that many churches are not filling. Although the program is in the embryo stage, it has already shown evidence of providing social and spiritual enrichment for the entire Oakdale community as well as the church. It provides the opportunity for this church to be of even greater service to the community that has supported its growth for more than 27 years.

### Remodeling Project

Work days were set aside at the beginning of 1987 to make repairs and changes in the educational building. The youth and children's area was completely remodeled. Walls were removed and a new floor plan made better use of wasted space, almost doubling usable space in this department. During the renovation, a library was added to promote books with a Christian emphasis which are available for loan, making the earlier arrangement more efficient and expanding its use.

The public address system was also updated, and new aluminum and

vinyl trim added to all wooden surfaces on the exterior of the building.

## **Sunday School**

Special emphasis was placed on Sunday School again in 1987, resulting in an increase in new members as well as an increased attendance. The pastors reports that 35 were added to the roll in the past year. He and other church leaders agree that the Sunday School continues to be a strong part of the church program.

There has also been a notable increase in membership by profession of faith as well as transfers by letter. Upon the recommendation of the Youth Council, Guy Knox was employed as Summer Youth Worker. He attended a training session at Meredith College for summer workers. His work and the work of other summer workers has proved to be extremely beneficial to the total church program and has kept Oakdale a young and growing church.

## **Oldest Member Recognized**

Rev. S.G. Swann, retired minister and member of Oakdale for 26 years, celebrated his 100th birthday on May 6, 1987. He was honored by his family and members of his church with a party to mark the event. Forty six pew Bibles were placed in the church in his honor, a fitting tribute to one who gave many years of service to the ministry of the Gospel, first as a pastor and finally as a dedicated and loyal member of Oakdale.

Mr. Swann is remembered fondly by the men who watched him work by their side after his retirement. He was instrumental in getting the church off the ground with his prayers, but he worked with them digging the footing and rolling gravel as they prepared to build the first unit. They also remember him as a man who was faithful in attendance. When a heavy snow and ice covered the earth one Sunday morning everyone was certain that there would be no one at church; however, as they looked out the window, there came Mr. Swann walking out the road from his home to teach the Men's Sunday School Class. Even today this picture and the influence that he had on Oakdale and their lives stand out clearly in their memory. Mr. & Mrs. Swann moved into town when he could no longer drive. They became members of Front Street Church and later Bristol Drive Church which was closer to them; However, Oakdale Church was home and they became members there again and members of the church brought them to services as long as they were able to attend.

Members of Oakdale honored the memory of another in June 1987 when they placed 47 Baptist Hymnals in the sanctuary in memory of Rowland Hedgepeth who was a faithful member of the choir.



## **Children's Council**

As a result of the success of the Youth Council, a Children's Council was appointed to plan the program for the children. The following persons were appointed to serve on the newly organized committee: Cathy and Jeff Mullins, Katrina Redmond, Roy and Phyllis Pegram, and Steve and Terry McCoy. According to the church's pastor, the members of this council are all highly talented and capable individuals. They organize and plan a program of fellowship, bible studies and field trips. Working with the children this summer is youth worker Mildred Ann Galloway, a senior at W.C. University. She is at home from Brevard and conducts a day camp once a week. Trips planned for school vacation will be to the Historic Museum at Spencer, Tanglewood and Tweetsie. Future plans include a long range planning committee.

## **Three New Committees**

Three new committees were added to Oakdale's officers in 1987. Outreach Ministry will assist in determining areas where the church needs to minister to individuals and families facing a crisis situation. The New Member Visitation Committee will assign persons to help new members become orientated and learn about activities in the church. This becomes extremely important as the area around Oakdale sees further development. The potential for even more rapid growth in the future is inevitable. The third, known as the accounting committee, will be responsible for counting gifts and preparing the weekly bank deposit.

# Pastors



**Thomas L. Reese**  
**Mission Pastor**  
**Jan. 5 - April 30, 1961**



**Joe T. Whitworth**  
**May 1, 1961 -**  
**December 9, 1964**



**Latt Beshears**  
**February 14, 1965 -**  
**January 12, 1969**



**Norman Joyner**  
**February 1, 1969 -**  
**February 13, 1977**

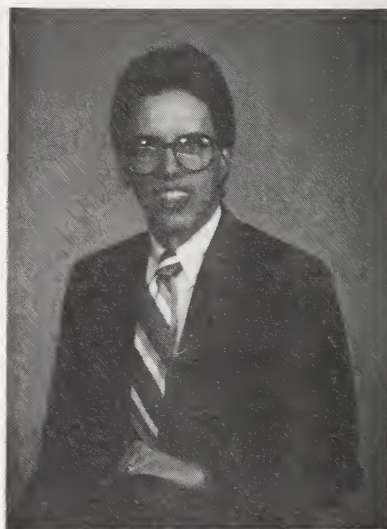




**John Richard Booth**  
**October 1, 1978 - February 1, 1981**



**Charles Lee Hutchens**  
**June 1, 1981 -**  
**April 30, 1986**



**Mark Allen Tilley**  
**November 24, 1986**  
**Present**



**Mr. & Mrs. S.G. Swann**

**Mr. Swann is the oldest member of Oakdale Church, born May 6, 1887.**

**Lois Yates Swann died June 3, 1986. She was a great lady and organized Woman's Missionary Union of Oakdale Baptist Church.**



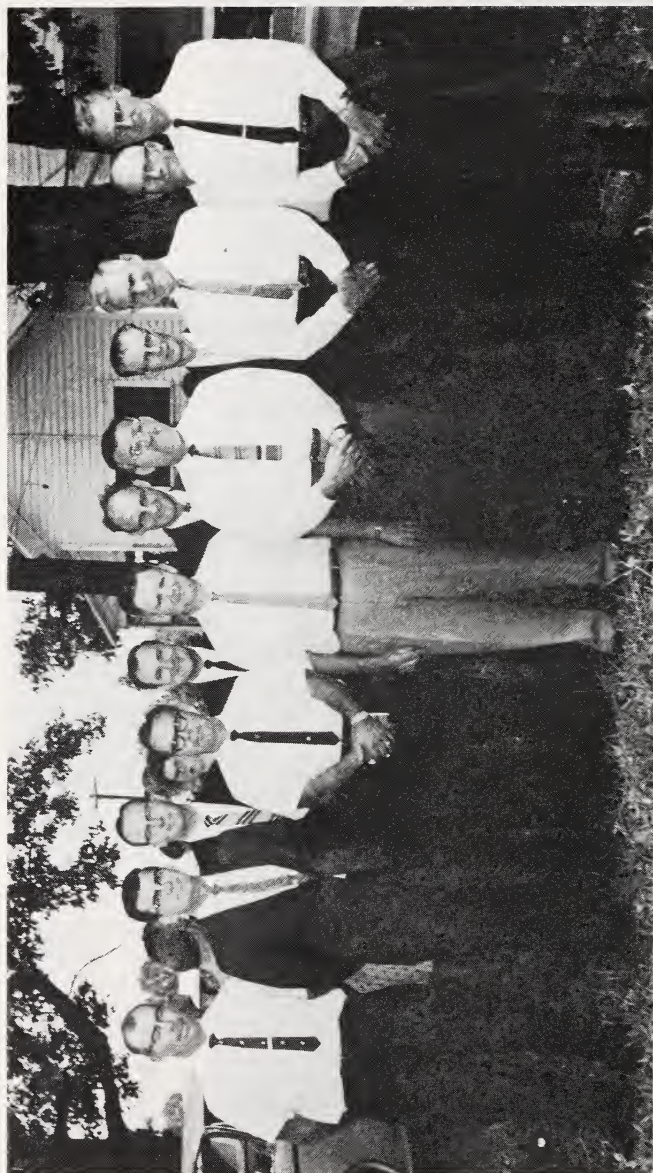
**American Legion Building, formerly Oakdale School. The first meeting place of Oakdale Baptist Mission January 8, 1961. This building was located just north of present location of I-40, two miles west of the present location of Oakdale Baptist Church.**





**Ground Breaking for Oakdale Baptist Church's First Building June 4, 1961.**

**The F.N. Beaver home, known as John Q. Carter place, in background. The church met here after the first month as a mission. Front Row: Dr. E.L. Spivey, Cecil A. Bell, Pastor; Joe T. Whitworth, with shovel; Elmer Thomas, Roy Jurney, Building Chairman, and Hugh Welborn. Surrounded by congregation.**



**Pastors, Building Committee and Others June 4, 1961.**

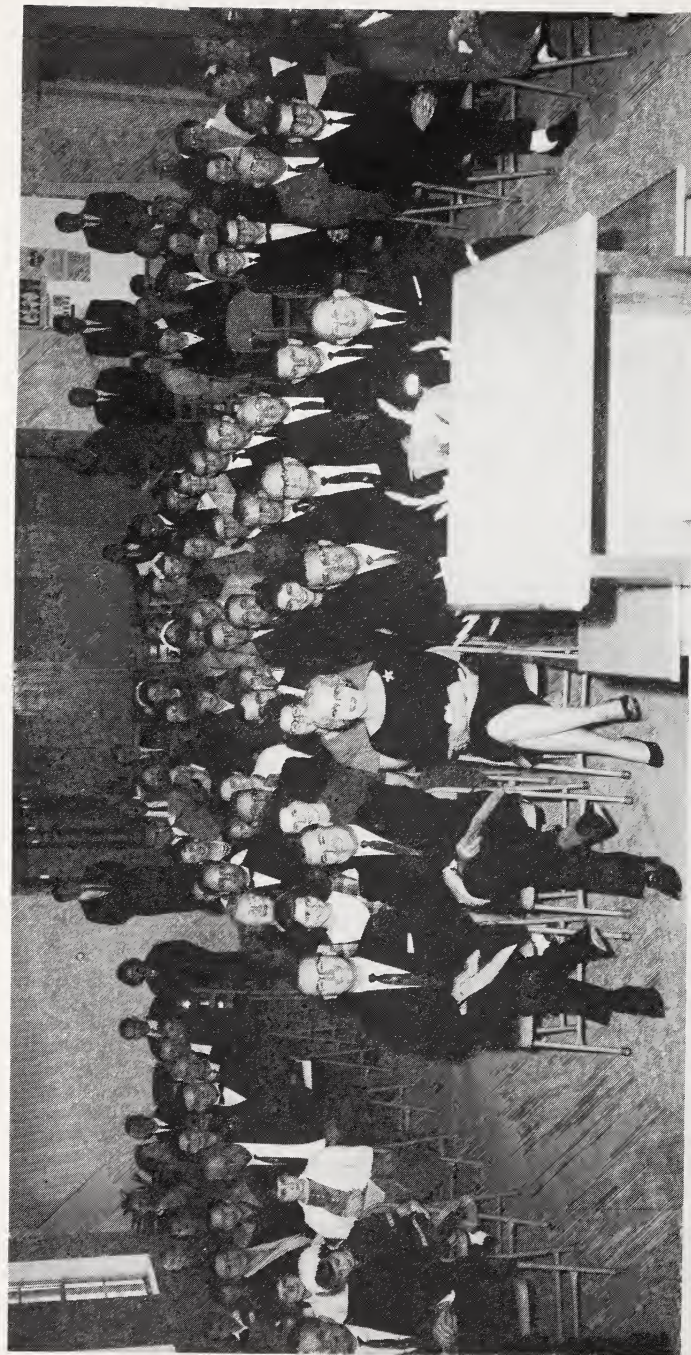
**Front Row: Cecil A. Bell, Roy Jurney, Paul Holder, Don Holton, Joe T. Whitworth, Pastor; Richard Williams, Oren Bost. Second Row: Thomas L. Reese, Pastor, Front Street Baptist Church; Lee Fincannon, Elmer Thomas, Director Missions; South Yadkin Association; Harlan Lackey, Woodrow Bell.**





**Oakdale Baptist Mission was Organized as a Church January 7, 1962.**

**Front Row: Dr. John Sykes, Pastor, Statesville First Baptist Church; Elmer Thomas, Director South Yadkin Association; Paul McAlpin, Pastor, Eastside Baptist Church; Dr. E.L. Spivey, NC Baptist Convention; Lee Fincannon. Second Row: Joe T. Whitworth, Pastor; Harvey Brewington, Pastor, Bethel Baptist Church; Thomas King, Thomas Reese, Third Row: Patricia Watson, Janet DeHart, Elizabeth Rash, Selene Holton, Joann DeHart, Margaret Bost, Betty Bost, Brenda Williams, Fourth Row: Gene Lippard, Roy Jurney, Zeno Proctor, S.G. Swann, Gary Mize, J.A. Roper, Boyd Jarvis, Don Holton and Larry Connell.**



**Oakdale Baptist Church at Organizational Service January 7, 1962.**

**Front Row: Thomas L. Reese, Lee Fincannon, Mrs. Cecil Bell, Pianist; Joe T. Whitworth, Pastor; Dr. E.L. Spivey, NC Baptist State Convention and congregation.**





The second and third phases of the educational building were completed in 1964. The congregation stands at the entrance to the fellowship hall, which is to be used as temporary sanctuary.



**Educational Building and Fellowship Hall, used as sanctuary temporarily.**





**Reception for New Pastor Latt Beshears and wife, Rose, in Fellowship Hall, February 14, 1965. Mrs. Herman Meredith serves punch.**



**Oakdale Woman's Missionary Union Members attended North Carolina WMU Annual Meeting, Greensboro, NC, March 16-18, 1965. Left to Right: Mrs. John Sherrill, Mrs. J.M. Styers, Latt Beshears, Pastor; Mrs. W.O. Bell, Mrs. Latt Beshears, Mrs. George Weaver.**





**Annette Bell was crowned the first queen of Girl's Auxiliary at Oakdale, Sunday evening, September 6, 1967. Participating in the ceremony were Brenda Bell, Terry Lippard, Maidens; Katrina Proctor, Princess; Frank Moore, Crown Bearer; Annette Bell, Queen; Jill Weaver, Flower Girl; Pam Jurney, Teresa Fox, Debbie DeHart, Ladies-in-Waiting.**



**The Girl's Auxiliary second Coronation ceremony was held Sunday evening, September 15, 1968 with Katrina Redmond crowned Queen. Front Row: unidentified, Kylene Proctor, Flower Girls; Queen Katrina Proctor; Kristy Proctor, Crown Bearer. Second Row: Annette Bell, Queen; Brenda Bell, Debbie DeHart, Pam Jurney, Sherrie Anderson, Lynn Bustle, Marian Holton.**



**Oakdale Baptist Church has been host for many Associational activities.**

**Marse Grant, editor of the "Biblical Recorder" signs in at the annual meeting of the South Yadkin Association on October 16, 1970. Making him welcome is Mrs. June Lippard, church secretary, Oakdale.**





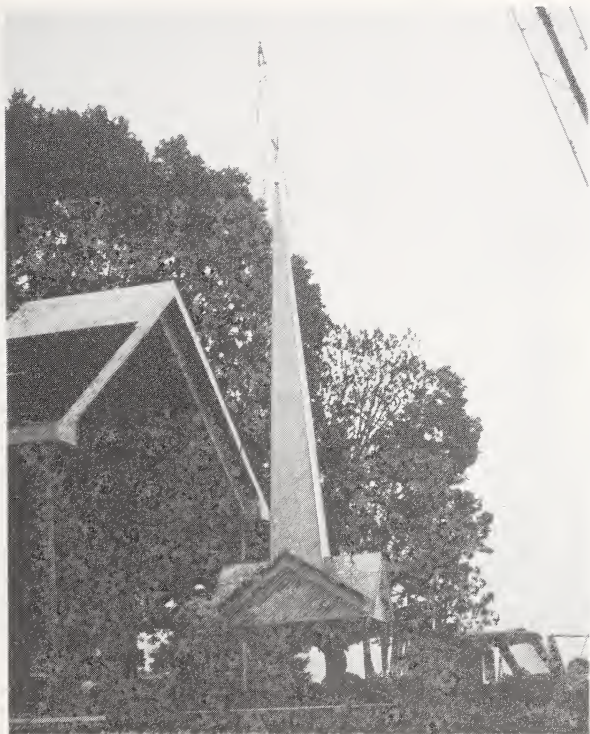
**Sanctuary Building Committee**

**First Row: Wilma Laws, Velma Styers, Sarah Bell, Second Row: Sam Miller, Gary Lloyd, Don Holton, Bill Holland, Roy Jurney, J.V. Johnson, Building Chairman; Jack Sigmon was absent from picture.**

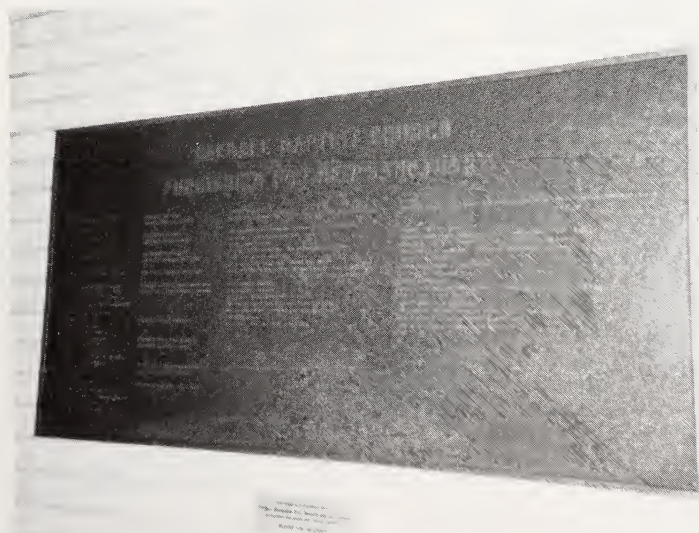


**Interior of Sanctuary**

**Sanctuary Dedication Service was held November 24, 1974.**



**Steeple being put in place for new sanctuary.**



**Plaque with names of persons giving windows and furnishings for sanctuary.**





**Fellowship has always been a part of Oakdale. Gary Lloyd, Pastor John Booth, Gar Hendrix.**



**Seniors on a trip to the mountains.**





**Mrs. Linda Bowes, Church Secretary**



**Deacons 1987**

**Front Row: Tom Stikeleather, Orlon Miller, George Weaver, Rex Bell, Steve Johnson, Mike Scruggs. Back Row: Gene Whitesides, Mark Tilley, Pastor, and Ray Anderson.**



**N. Gary Alexander,  
Music Director**



**Mrs. Cynthia Dickerson,  
Organist**



**Mrs. Joann Anderson, Pianist**



**Adult Choir**





**Pastor Mark Tilley, Children's Sermon**



**Children's Music on Easter Sunday**



### **Clown Ministry**

**Kneeling:** Brian Alexander, Danielle Henderson, Sandy Barlett, Gina Whitesides, Janice Burns. **Standing:** Gay Whitesides, Sheila Payne, Aleisa Alexander, Che Navey, Chris Barlett, Tye Burns.



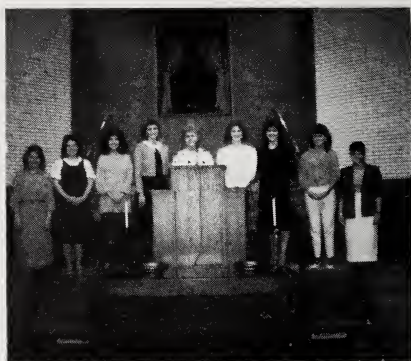
### **Mission Friends**

**Clockwise:** Jessica Journey, Brandon Pegram, Deborah Anderson, Lindsey Tilley, Kara Redmond, Laura McCoy, Sara Mullins, Nick Lowe, Gregg Lowe, Paul Scruggs, Meredith Williams. **Leaders:** Kathy Mullins, Steve and Terry McCoy, Julie Inman.



### **Baptist Women**

**Audrey Stikeleather, Selene Holton, Elizabeth Weaver, Julia Inman, Gay Whitesides, Nannie Lue Hollar, Velma Styers, Ann Hedgepeth, Mildred Whitley, Marie Bell, Mary Nell Miller, Lucretia Stroud.**



### **Baptist Young Women**

**Cindy Jurney, Kathy Mullins, Sheila Payne, Katrina Redmond, June Lippard, Advisor; Kristy Ruth, Kylene Johnson, Rhonda Johnson, Shelly Rosenbalm.**



### **Acteens**

**Katrina Redmond, Leader; Susan Morris, Danielle Henderson, Melody Wall, Gina Whitesides, Aleisa Alexander, Sharon Scruggs, Leader.**



### **Girls in Action**

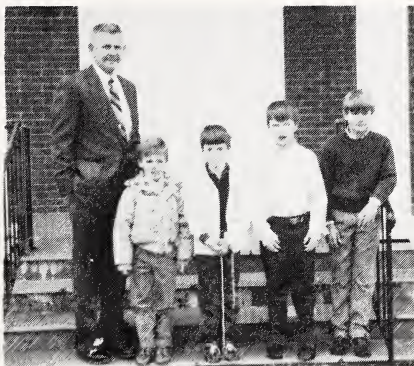
**Libby Green, Gay Whitesides, Leader; Kaley Redmond, Ashley Settle, Rachel Anderson, Judy Baker, Leader; Emily Mullins, Sarah Anderson.**





### **Baptist Men**

**Rhod Lowe, Clyde Henderson, Mark Tilley, Gary Alexander, Gilbert Hill, Gene Whitesides, Rowland Hedgepeth, Don Wall; Second Row: David Payne, Steve McCoy, Hiram Williams, Mark Johnson, Guy Knox, Ed Inman. Back Row: Tom Stikeleather, Don Holton, Steve Johnson, Karl Johnson.**



### **Royal Ambassadors**

**Gene Whitesides, Leader; Nick Lowe, Jason Jurney, Brian Alexander, Marty Carter.**



### **Boy Scouts**



### **Girl Scouts**





### Senior Chorus

Front Row: Nannie Lue Hollar, Selene Holton, Don Holton, Leuceta Stroud, Gary Alexander, Director. Second Row: Velma Styers, June Lippard, Ruth Williams, Ed Inman, Julia Inman, Sarah Bell, Marie Bell. Back Row: George Weaver, Elizabeth Weaver, Allie Batts, Richard Williams, Oren Bost, Dena Bost.



### Youth Choir

Gary Alexander, Director; Danielle Henderson, Trudy Bass, Gina Whitesides, Melody Wall, Christy Wall, Beth Jenkins, Aleisa Alexander, Alyssa Somers, Susan Morris, Jennifer Little, Katrina Redmond, Pianist.



### Sonshine Singers

Meredith Williams, Kara Redmond, Sarah Mullins, Laura McCoy, Lindsey Tilley, Janice Burns, Director; Jessica Journey, Gregg Lowe, Paul Scruggs, Nick Lowe, Brandon Pegram, Deborah Anderson.



### Music Makers

Josh Tilley, Justin Journey, Libby Green, Emily Mullins, Second Row: Rachel Anderson, Sarah Anderson, Kaley Redmond; Directors Joann Anderson, Sylvia Redmond and Ray Anderson.

# VIII

## Organizations

### Woman's Missionary Union

Mrs. S.G. Swann, the wife of a retired Baptist minister, led in the organization of the Woman's Missionary Union during the church's first year. Earliest presidents of the WMU were Mrs. George Weaver and Mrs. W.O. Bell. By 1964, there were three circles: Martha Yates Brady Circle, named for a missionary to South America and a niece of Mrs. Swann; Doris Spencer Circle, named for a missionary in Okinawa; and Grace McBride Circle. Each of these groups has a chairman who serves with chairman, such as prayer, program, publicity, mission study, enlistment, community missions, stewardship, publication and social. The circles held an enrollment contest with losing circles to entertain the winner. The Martha Yates Brady Circle, was the winner and was entertained at a covered dish supper by the two losing circles.

The women's circles are very active in their support of organizations for the girls in the church. Beginner and primary boys and girls are known as Sunbeams, the Girl's Auxiliary and Young Woman's Auxiliary are for older girls. The first Girl's Auxiliary Coronation Service was held at Oakdale with Annette Bell crowned as queen; Katrina Proctor, princess; and Debbie DeHart, Pam Journey and Teresa Fox, ladies-in-waiting. Brenda Bell and Terry Lippard were maidens. Other G.A. members participated in the ceremony, and the Royal Ambassadors, a boy's organization, was given recognition for awards that they received in their work. Attendance was excellent with "a full house" reported. The WMU has also sponsored Mother-Daughter Banquets in addition to the annual Coronation Service. They are always supportive of all youth activities, as well as the church program as a whole.

These three circles have been described by the men of the church as the "most functional in the church. They get things done." They have the entire service on Sunday morning annually. Usually they have a foreign missionary to speak during the worship hour, although the men admit that the church has several women who are good speakers.

The Christmas and Easter seasons are time when we usually think of others. At these times, especially, the WMU has many activities for shut-ins and the needy. Each year they promote the Lottie Moon Christmas offering for foreign missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter offering for home missions with generous contributions. They are just as involved with community missions, always on the alert for some need where they can lend their assistance. In their report to the church

conference in November 1984, women were participating in volunteer work with Yokefellow, Hospice, Courtwatchers and the Vocational Workshop for the handicapped, as well as visitation and mission activities in the community and church.

In February 1986, Oakdale's WMU had a program in observance of the 100th anniversary of the Woman's Missionary Union in North Carolina. The women and girls in the church observed WMU Focus Week, beginning with the recognition of all leaders and the WMU Responsive Reading as a part of the worship service. On February 11, there was a drama on missions presented by Mrs. Julia Inman, Mrs. Katrina Redmond, Mrs. Reda Journey, Mrs. Gay Whitesides and Mrs. Gail Lowe.

As Woman's Missionary Union grew south-wide, organizations' names were changed. At present WMU is composed of Baptist Women, Young Baptist Women, Baptist Young Women, Acteens, Girls in Action and Mission Friends. Boys in grades one through high school are still Royal Ambassadors and are now under the Brotherhood.

The current year, 1988, has been a very special year for Oakdale's WMU, as well as Southern Baptist Convention Woman's Missionary Unions throughout the world. This is the Centennial Year of WMU which was organized in Richmond, Virginia on May 14, 1888. This event was celebrated in Richmond May 13-14, 1988. Seven ladies from Oakdale attended this very special event. The editor of the **Biblical Recorder** described the celebration as "crammed with history, rich in fellowship, noble in ambition, sweet in spirit, delightful to behold, pleasant to hear, stirring in challenge, and deep in dedication, the program left nothing to be desired." More than 11,000 women and a few hundred men attended. Oakdale WMU presented a drama entitled **WMU Yesterday/Today** on Sunday night, June 5, 1988 at the church. The challenge was A Century to Celebrate -- A Future to Fulfill.

### **Brotherhood**

The first Brotherhood was organized in the church's first year with Dan Kay serving as president. How long it lasted is not known. On October 11, 1967 the men met at a fellowship dinner to organize the Baptist Men of Oakdale Baptist Church and elected L.P. Bell as president. The group met regularly for the next year or so. Their monthly meetings were centered on the ways to make their Christian witness more effective. After a period of being inactive, the Brotherhood reorganized following a special breakfast on Sunday morning, April 2, 1978. In 1988, it is still active with young men deeply involved in the organization.

### **Youth Programs**

The Baptist Training Union, an organization for adults, youth and

children meeting on Sunday evenings, provides training opportunities for all ages in the church. From the beginning Oakdale has recognized the importance of a strong youth program. W.O. Bell was the first director, and he was assisted by a number of other good leaders. This department was under the direction of Don Holton for the next two years. These men laid the foundation for the youth department that has flourished for the past twenty-six years, and that promises to add strength to Oakdale Church in the coming years.

In the early days and months, enrollment was about 34 with an average attendance of 26. Meetings were usually discontinued during the summer months when many families were away on vacation. The youth program had developed into a strong program by 1973. The enrollment had increased to 73, but as usual attendance was lagging since the church had decided to continue during the summer for the youth who were at home.

Enrollment and attendance fluctuated during the years, but church officials were always attentive to the changes. In March 1974 there was a Youth Revival with Rev. Eugene Sherrill, a native of Iredell County who was then living in North Dakota, as the visiting speaker. Although the enrollment was down the next year, attendance reached about one hundred percent for a short time.

The new year got off to a good start for the youth in 1976. They began the year with another Youth Revival in January with Rev. Joe Whitworth, a former pastor, and a youth team from Garner-Webb College in charge of the services. Summer came and went, and by November, the church voted to discontinue the Training Union.

Many churches no longer have Training Union, and as at Oakdale, the time prior to evening worship is devoted to the different choirs, clown ministry and other groups of the church.

One of the first orders of business in 1980 was to make plans to hire a youth worker for the summer. The next year, a study was made of the needs for preschool children. Additional instructional materials were purchased and an increased emphasis was placed on training these young children. The committee recommended that they be encouraged to participate in other programs that would be beneficial to their spiritual growth.

Oakdale was fortunate to be able to secure the services of one of fifty workers available to 99 churches who had applied for a summer worker. Kevin Meadows worked with the youth at Oakdale in 1984 and 1985. This arrangement was definitely an asset to the Youth Program and the church as a whole. During his last summer, Kevin was licensed to preach by Oakdale. Finally, in 1986 another youth worker was found. Rev. Keith Garris was hired in July to work until mid-August when he returned to Southern Seminary.



Youth involvement has always been encouraged by the members at Oakdale. Robin Miller and Kim Hendrix were the first youth to be chosen as Junior Deacons which was an educational experience that helped train young people to assume adult roles of leadership. Periodically, Youth Week has been observed with youth from the church serving in places of leadership throughout the week and on Sunday morning. Baptist Student Union members from one of the colleges participate in the Sunday services along with the local youth. They have also presented special programs at Homecoming and other special events.

In 1983, Mrs. Rhod Lowe started a clown ministry at Oakdale. She received help from many children, youth and adults. They share with the congregation each first Sunday morning, as well as perform at other churches, associational activities, Vocational Workshop parties, and many other special events. They attend clown workshops in the state and are well trained.

Recreation for the youth has not been overlooked. In 1983, the church bought new equipment which included a ping pong table, basketball and soccer equipment, and horseshoes.

Today Oakdale is a young growing church with many young families. The members attribute this to the Summer Youth Workers and the emphasis that they have placed on their youth program from the beginning, giving them encouragement, leadership with love and a well-rounded program.

## **Music**

As early as January 29, 1961, plans were underway to begin the music ministry at Oakdale. The American Legion owned a piano which was used in the first services, so a choir was organized with Mrs. Sarah Bell serving as the first pianist. Choir rehearsal was scheduled for the following Wednesday night.

More than a year later, Reece Childers was approved to serve as the first choir director and his son, Terry, became the pianist. Prior to this time, the music was under the leadership of Hugh Welborn, chairman of the Music Committee. In September 1963, Mrs. C.A. (Sarah) Bell presented the gift of a Baby Grand Piano to the church to be placed in the sanctuary in memory of her father, James R. Fulbright. Thus Oakdale's music ministry began early, promising to be one of the outstanding programs in the church which it has become.

Reece Childers continued to serve as Minister of Music through 1966, and Terry Childers was pianist until about 1964 when Keith Bell was appointed. Paul Barnes replaced Reece Childers as Minister of Music, and he served until the fall of 1968 when Oakdale hired H.T. Davis of Statesville to be the first full-time choir director. Prior to this time, the

music committee had worked closely with the choir directors who served part-time to plan the church's music. The church recognized Mr. Childer's service to the music department with a letter of appreciation.

In 1971, a new piano was purchased for the sanctuary. Dr. Barry Miller of Charlotte gave the church a generous gift in memory of his father, Sam Miller, to be applied to the piano fund. The occasion for this gift was Father's Day.

Gary Alexander, former choir director at Temple Baptist Church for four years, was called to be music director at Oakdale in June 1978. In October, his report noted 35 members in the choir with an average attendance of 24. The next year a junior choir was organized with 17 members. They presented a cantata entitled "Second Time A King" during the Easter Season in 1979.

The music department reached another milestone in the church's history in April 1979. After months of planning, the congregation decided that the time had come to add an organ to the sanctuary to enhance the already excellent music program of the church. The director and choir also took advantage of a Music Seminar in cooperation with the North Carolina Baptist Music Department the same spring. Oakdale was well represented at the seminar.

The enrollment in both choirs showed a steady increase, and they presented special programs again in the fall. With additional activity, a music council was created to help plan a more efficient music program for the church.

On October 12, 1980, Mrs. Dottie Rash was employed as full-time organist after having worked as interim organist for several weeks. On the recommendation of the Music Council, Mrs. Ray Anderson was named pianist in January 1981.

The young musicians, a group with twenty members, became known as "The Rainbow Connection" in 1982. The children's choir of six members were also active at this time. The youth are still active and participate in the Music Retreat at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Always striving for improvement and an even better choir, its members attended the Association Music Clinic held at Oakdale in January 1982. The choir also participated in other choir activities with the Association, and they have hosted several of these events. Oakdale's choir has also given programs outside the local church. In 1982, they presented the Christmas cantata to the residents at Plaza Apartments, an apartment complex in Statesville for retired and handicapped persons.

Joan Anderson, who was expecting her third child, and Jill Weaver, who enrolled at Wake Forest University, resigned as church organist and pianist. Cynthia Dickerson served as interim organist until February 1983 when she accepted the position full-time. She is still serving as organist in 1988, JoAnn Anderson returned as pianist and still serves in that capacity,

and Gary Alexander continues to serve as choir director.

In September 1984, the Senior Citizens' Chorus was organized and began meeting monthly. Mrs. Sarah Bell, the oldest active member of the church and the first Oakdale pianist, and Cynthia Dickerson accompany this newest group of musicians, who are active participants in the church's music program. The thirteen members enjoy the fellowship, as well as the singing. They go on outings as a group, as they did in 1986 and 1987 when they had breakfast at The Cottage Restaurant in Wilkesboro, North Carolina.



## IX

# Buildings and Grounds

Oakdale met in the home of Zeno and Rose Proctor for their first service; however, they were able to begin using the American Legion Building which was originally Oakdale School on January 8, 1961. Space was limited so there was little room for individual classes, so some groups doubled up. The building was heated with an old pot-bellied stove in every room, and on one occasion there was so much smoke in the building that it just barely cleared out in time for classes to begin. Oren Bost, Jim Mize, Roy Journey and Zeno Proctor came early, sometimes as early as five o'clock in the morning, to build the fires so that the old schoolhouse was warm by the time others began arriving for Sunday School. Oren Bost also made some repairs to make their job of heating and building a little easier.

Response to the new mission was so overwhelming that they soon outgrew these facilities, so after only four weeks, the F.N. Beaver home at the intersection of Highway US 64 east and the River Hill Road was purchased for \$13,500. The timing was perfect, and the property was described as one of the prettiest sites in the county. The congregation met to worship in the old house on the property at the present site on January 29, 1961.

Once again Oren and the other men began getting the old house on their property ready to serve the many needs of a growing mission. Partitions were removed to make an area large enough for an assembly room which was to be used for the worship service. All of the work was done by volunteers united in a spirit of cooperation, described by several of the men as "second to none."

### First Phase of Building Program

In a few months, Oakdale had outgrown the old house. Jim Mize recalls taking his men's class out to an old wood shed that was open all across the front when spring came. Don Holdon set up class for his junior boys on the back porch. This was all well enough in the spring and summer, but the people knew that the time had come to expand. In June 1961, after Rev. Joe Whitworth had become their pastor, a ground breaking service was observed with a picnic lunch at noon and singing in the afternoon, setting a tradition of close ties and warm fellowship among the church family. There is fellowship among the church family that is still seen in 1988. And so began work on the first unit of an educational building the following week, a monumental step for a

mission who was only six months old. Oakdale Baptist Church was organized six months later to begin their second year.

The pastor had made the announcement of the ground breaking in the bulletin on June 4, 1961. It read as follows:

“Pastor’s Corner -- On Sunday June 11, 1961, we will observe ground breaking exercises. This will be a great day for Oakdale Baptist Mission, for on this day we will be putting the muscles of our faith to work, as we undertake to construct the first unit of our building. Let us pray and work to see this undertaking completed to the glory of God and the salvation of many lost people.”

The new structure, which was 38 feet wide and 111 feet long, included sixteen classrooms, a pastor’s study and rest rooms. It was built with Roy Journey as chairman of the building committee to double as an educational building and sanctuary until other phases were completed. Volunteer labor was used for the first phase which was valued at \$25,000. Some of the men who worked on the project recall that Carl Bush did a lot of the finish work. Don Holton brought his men in to do the masonry work. Although they were paid for the job, they also contributed a lot of their labor.

Rev. Joe Whitworth was on the job early every morning to gather the work crews together, opening the day with a prayer. The men who worked on the building truly believe that this first unit was built with prayer, not just sweat, mortar and brick. The pastor impressed upon them that he wanted their church built with love surrounding every brick and block, and as they still say “with the glory going to God.” According to them, this witness has made a lasting impression on them, and they saw other workers with the contractors also touched by his witness.

Oakdale has also been built on faith. One example that has been recalled by some of the pioneers testifies to the strong faith of these people. During one of the building projects, the men decided to dig the foundation with picks and shovels. When they found that the ground was too hard, they knew that the only answer was to get a back-hoe to do the job even though they had felt that they could not afford it if they could do the job themselves. By the time the job was completed, the money was waiting to pay the operator, lying in the ditch, so the bill was paid on the spot! They have found this to be true throughout Oakdale’s history.

### **Second Phase of Building Program**

Probably the most phenomenal part of the history of this church is its rapid growth. Building additions could not be completed until more room was needed. Early members attribute this to a hunger of the people

in the community for a church, especially the Baptists who traveled ten miles or more to reach a Baptist church, also the warmth and enthusiasm of the members. And certainly not to be overlooked is an observation made by several men who were there during this period of growth and expansion. They compared what happened to praying for rain. When their prayers were answered, they reflected, "in place of a drizzle, we got a downpour of blessings."

For all these reasons, in less than two years, Oakdale began the second phase of the building program under the leadership of the following building committee; Oren Bost, Carl Bush, J.M. Styers, C.A. Bell, Waldo Hoots, Don Holton and Gene Lippard. The committee was named on January 2, 1963, and plans were soon underway to begin construction.

The educational building was built in three phases. During the years when the church has not been actively involved in a building program, improvements and additions have been made to existing buildings and the church grounds. Goals were reached as many dedicated workers contributed many hours of labor. In addition to those who have already been mentioned, Carl Bush and his men did considerable work in the church during snowy weather -- framing doors. refinishing doors, etc. All of this work was contributed by him. In addition to the work on the building, parking facilities have been kept upgraded. When the educational building was complete, the old house was sold and moved across the road.

### **Sanctuary Built**

On February 15, 1970, the Deacons sent a recommendation to the congregation to appoint a planning committee to study and formulate plans to build a sanctuary. The committee was approved as follows on March 8, 1970: L.P. Bell, Don Holton, Roy Jarvis, Mrs. Carl Bush and Mrs. Cecil A. Bell. After several years of planning, the ground breaking ceremony was held on August 26, 1976, and one of the goals of Oakdale was soon to be a reality. The first money for the sanctuary was given at the death of Cecil A. Bell, an active, dedicated member of the church, as a memorial to him.

The first step before the actual construction began was to pave the area at the back of the church to eliminate mud during the building program. Adequate parking was provided. Careful planning helped carry on the church's ministry during this time with as little inconvenience to the congregation as possible.

The new sanctuary was financed by the sale of bonds. In 1974, three special days were set aside to promote the building program. Memorials for windows, pews and furnishings were secured from members. These memorials which were placed in the new sanctuary were as follows:



Large Window of Christ

Bell in Steeple

Pulpit Furniture

Furnace & Air Conditioning

Brass Flower Container

Mrs. J.M. Styers

Memory J.M. Styers

Mrs. Cecil A. Bell

Memory Cecil A. Bell

Mrs. Woodrow O. Bell

Memory Woodrow O. Bell

Mrs. & Mrs. John V. Johnson

DeAnne Harris and Sandra Ross

Honor Mr. and Mrs. Eugene C.  
Moore

### **Windows - East Side Sanctuary**

Audrey Stikeleather

Joanna Parlier

Pattie Clendenin

Mrs. & Mrs. Roy Journey

Mr. & Mrs. L.P. Bell, Jr.

Cecil Gentle

Memory Cecil A. Bell

Memory Mrs. Ida M. Bell

Memory Merita Gentle

### **Windows - West Side Sanctuary**

Mr. & Mrs. Don Duncan

Oakdale Church

Mr. & Mrs. Jack Sigmon, Sr.

Mr. & Mrs. George B. Weaver and Jill

Mr. & Mrs. H.T. Davis, Jr.

Mr. & Mrs. Don Holton

Honor Mr. & Mrs. O.L. Stroud

Mr. & Mrs. Edgar Duncan

Honor Rev. & Mrs. S.G. Swann

### **Pews**

Pulpit Pews - Oakdale Church

Honor Rev. & Mrs. Norman Joyner  
Judson

### **West Side**

Oakdale Church

Adult Men's SS Class #2

Adult Men's SS Class #2

Adult Men's SS Class #2

Curvin Paul Stroud

Donald E. Sigmon

Mr. & Mrs. Jack W. Sigmon, Jr.

Rev. Latt Beshears

Honor Rev & Mrs. Joe T. Whitworth

Sam M. Miller, Teacher

Sam M. Miller, Teacher

Sam M. Miller, Teacher

Memory Roger Stroud

Rose Beshears

Mr. & Mrs. Tom Stikeleather      Honor Mrs. Cecil A. Bell

Mr. & Mrs. Oren Bost

Mr. & Mrs. Grady Bustle

In Memory of Mrs. Stella Eudy and Elsie Eudy

Mr. & Mrs. Herman Meredith and Michael

Mr. & Mrs. Tom Laws, Todd and Mark

### **Pews - East Side**

Oakdale Church      Honor Rev. & Mrs. Latt Beshears

Mr. & Mrs. Zeno Proctor, Katrina, Kristy, Kylene

Mr. & Mrs. Bill Laxenby and boys

Mrs. Cecil A. Bell

Adult Men's SS Class      H.T. Davis, Jr., Teacher

Mr. & Mrs. James Schank

Mr. & Mrs. Jap Johnson, Sheila and Julie

Mrs. Marcus H. Webster      Memory Marcus H. Webster and  
Mrs. Nannie Mae Fann

John Cloer Family

H.E. Yountz Family

Mr. & Mrs. Bill Holland and Rena

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Johnson and children

Mr. & Mrs. Landis Grose, Lisa and Michael

Cecil Gentle

Mr. & Mrs. Bill Holland and Rena

Members of the building committee were: Jack Sigmon, Mrs. Tommy Laws, Mrs. Velma Styers, Mrs. Sarah Bell, Sam Miller, Gary Lloyd, Don Holton, Bill Holland, Roy Journey and J.V. Johnson, chairman. Gary Lloyd served as treasurer of the building fund. Deacons during this period were: J.V. Johnson, Herman Meredith, Gary Lloyd, Oren Bost, W.O. Bell, Tommy Laws and Sam Miller, chairman.

Dedication services for the new sanctuary began during the morning services on November 24, 1974 with the Message of Thanksgiving by Rev. Norman Joyner. The Word of God was read by Rev. Thomas Reece, who was pastor of First Street Baptist Church at the time of Oakdale's organization as a mission. Zeno Proctor, one of Oakdale's founders, responded for the church's charter members.

The Dedication Service was held at a 3:00 p.m. service during the afternoon. Pastors who participated were: Rev. Norman Joyner, church pastor; Rev. Joe Whitworth, their first pastor; Rev. Latt Beshears, a former pastor; and Rev. W.W. Abernathy. Katrina Proctor was pianist, and J.V. Johnson, chairman of the building committee, presented the building to the congregation. Open House was observed immediately following the service.

From the beginning, the church's buildings have been kept in good repair and constantly updated as needed to best carry on the church's excellent program. Care has been taken to provide an atmosphere for the Christian education and spiritual enrichment of the congregation. The completion of the sanctuary provided the perfect fulfillment of the dreams of the pioneer group who had met to begin the year almost fourteen years earlier.

### **Special Gifts**

There have been those persons during Oakdale's twenty five years who have given the church special gifts. H. and B. Lumber Company generously furnished materials for the recreation center at a discount price in 1973, as well as making some donations. Several Japanese cherry trees were donated for the beautification of the church grounds by Bert Cornelius.

In January 1971, George B. Weaver presented the church with the library of his father, Rev. R.H. Weaver. The minister's library consisted of 197 volumes of reference books, as well as a variety of other books, including a Greek grammar dating back to 1860.

Jesse Asbury Roper, a charter member of Oakdale, bequeathed three-fourths interest in his estate to the church in 1979. In March 1980, the Roper Memorial Trust Fund was established in memory of Mr. Roper and his wife, Sally. At the same time, a memorial was placed at their burial site in Iredell Memorial Park.

A plaque at the back of the church was donated by Julian Campbell to recognize these gifts.

### **The Cemetery**

On April 26, 1970, Oakdale voted to begin a cemetery to be regulated by a cemetery committee for the use of the church's members. In April 1979, the church voted to limit its use to persons who had notified the committee by April 1 of their intent to use it. Its use was limited to spouses and immediate dependent family members only, as specified in the minutes. This action was taken because additional room used for this purpose would seriously limit space that was needed for parking and recreation.



# X

## A Time To Remember

Several charter members, as they reminisce, clearly remember that Zeno Proctor's vision of a Baptist church in the Oakdale Community played a large part in its organization. Others who had the foresight to have faith in this vision played a role that was just as important. With the blessing of Front Street, the mother church of what was to become Oakdale Baptist Church, Zeno, Jim Mize and Roy Journey made a survey to see how much interest there was in the area. The men were happy in their church, but the overwhelming and enthusiastic response that they got from the people could not be overlooked. There was a hunger among these people, they recall, for a Baptist church that would become a part of that community. They could not turn their backs on this call. So they moved forward and saw things happen beyond their wildest dreams.

What stands out strongest in their memory of those early days at Oakdale: The spirit of the people! The feeling of the presence of God among them and a spirit of cooperation second to none, they tell us. They speak of the strong ties -- like a family -- that grew among the people. One man told that he had visited a couple of Sundays to see what was going on. He had never been in a place where he felt the presence of God more strongly, and he immediately made plans to move his membership to Oakdale.

Not everyone who became a charter member came from Front Street, although they had the support of this church who furnished them with enough members to provide good, strong leadership for their organization. However, Oakdale's membership came from many places -- other Statesville churches, some Statesville residents, and others who were just looking for a church. All came together for the same purpose. As these people reminisce, they say that they wish that the whole state, or better still all the people in the Southern Baptist Convention, could share in the feeling of what happened during those years.

### The Chewing Gum Man

Every church has individuals who stand out in the memory of the children, as well as the adults. Zeno Proctor is remembered as the "chewing gum man" by the youngsters at Oakdale. He was given this name by the child of a new member when he missed church one Sunday, she inquired about the whereabouts of the chewing gum man. Zeno always has children "flocking after him," some of his friends say.

## **Quiet, But The Rock of Gibraltar**

Then there's Oren Bost, quiet, but a rock of Gibraltar, steady and dependable. He has been described by his fellowmen as the handy man -- like the father of the church described by some children who were always fixing things for them. When it's broken, Oren fixes it. (From the author's observations, perhaps more than just material things.) But Oren is quick to remind us that the glory goes to God.

## **Oakdale's Music Stops Traffic**

Before I-40 was completed, the main east-west traffic followed Highway 64 right by the church. One Sunday morning, Oakdale had visitors stop to join the worship service when they heard the congregation singing as they traveled down the road. The sound of music drifting through the windows prompted them to stop and join them for worship. Thus, the people at Oakdale have witnessed even to the passing motorists!

## **The Icy Trip to Zion Church**

Roy Journey has a very clear recollection of the trip up to North Iredell to pick up the church's first piano. Since he had a trucking company, he offered one of his transfer trucks to move it from Zion Church to Oakdale. Although the weather conditions were a little hazardous, to say the least, he, Oren and Zeno decided to get the piano to the church on time.

Everything seemed to go from bad to worse, and as they started down hill approaching the Old Campbell Mill Bridge, the going became even more treacherous. As the truck began sliding sideways threatening to jackknife, Zeno told the other boys that he would just get out and walk across the bridge, catching them on the other side. However, Oren said that if the truck could make it across that he intended to be riding. Well, Zeno decided that if it was alright for Oren, he would just ride along with them. With all confidences restored, they made it safely to the other side.

They reached Zion Church safely, and with the help of several of the men from that church they were able to get their piano on the big truck. Without too much further trouble, they delivered it safely to an appreciative congregation who has never forgotten the story of "going to Zion to get the piano."

## **Who Is Afraid Of A Black Snake?**

Oakdale men worked long and hard on the first unit of their building. They gathered tools from around the community, wherever they got an

offer for the loan of what they needed. When the time came to mix some cement, Woodrow Bell told them to come on down to his house and get his big box. Don and Roy went along with several others, and it took some manpower to lift it off the ground. When they turned it over, they found the biggest black snake they had ever seen, lying under the box in his cool, dark resting place. Don was the only one who would admit to being afraid of snakes, and they say that we will have to ask him just how fast he moved out of the way.



## The Second Generation at Oakdale

The second generation at Oakdale is assuming roles as adults in the church in 1988. They have been well prepared by their parents as well as their extended family, as they see their church family. Now, they want their children to know the special feeling of growing up in the same warm, loving atmosphere that they know. Older adults, like Grandma Styers and Pop Roper, stand out in their minds as they reminisce. Their first memories include loving Sunday School teachers, such as Rose Proctor and Martha Fox, and leaders like Mr. and Mrs. Don Holton. Then there was Zeno Proctor who greeted them after church and gave them a stick of chewing gum. These young adults have seen Christianity in action, and they described Oakdale as "more like one big family."

As seen through the eyes of those members who have spent their formative years in this church, it is obvious that all of the activities that were provided for them have had a listing effect on their lives. Sunday School and Vacation Bible School have had a profound and lasting influence that will guide them through years of guiding and teaching their children. Vacation Bible School was, and is yet, one of the big events each year, attracting more and more children each year from all areas of the community. And of course, Sunday School remains one of the mainstays in their lives, even as adults.

Youth group gatherings are among some of the fond memories of Oakdale's young adults. Special events, such as "Lock-ins" were planned by the Summer Youth workers who are remembered by young and old. Lock-ins provided a time for Oakdale's youth to meet and share with neighboring groups from other churches. Friday evening was used for Bible Study, games, Christian skits and singing. After an evening of fellowship, sleeping bags were unrolled and the group spent the night at the church. Sometimes the activities were directed by a Youth Core Team from one of the Baptist Colleges, who led discussions about problems that faced the youth in their day. The group had breakfast together the next morning before they went home.

Why do these young adults stay at Oakdale when so many churches are losing this group? They agree that it would be like leaving their families. There is something special about a close relationship that is like a big family, one of them remarked. That is what being at Oakdale is like, and it feels good, they say, knowing that they can always depend on each other in a time of need. Probably most important, they want to give their children this priceless gift that they received from the people at Oakdale.

## XII

# Oakdale Today

Rev. Mark Tilley sees Oakdale in 1988 as "sitting in a golden field for harvest" with a great opportunity for growth. The potential is there, and the church is ever looking for new ways to grow, not only in numbers but also in meeting the needs of the people in the total community, as well as at Oakdale. Mr. Tilley considers the church's top priority as outreach.

Oakdale is a Southern Baptist Church, autonomous in that it is self governing as all SBC churches. However, it is a member of the South Yadkin Association and affiliated from the very beginning with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Cooperative Program is the Baptist Way to a Lost World. It allows the church and individuals to go where they could not go and to do what they could not do. It is the glue that holds Southern Baptists together and enables them to stick to the Great Commission. Oakdale Church takes their responsibility for world missions seriously. The Cooperative Program is the financial method of giving, and Oakdale Church has participated in this program from the beginning. In 1988 fourteen and one half percent of the undesignated church budget goes to this program. The local church treasurer sends a check as designated by the budget to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina; a portion is kept in the state as designated by the state budget for its work, such as evangelism, colleges, child care, hospitals, direct missions, student work, aging and others. The remaining portion is sent to the Southern Baptist Convention and disbursed according to the budget there which includes Home and Foreign Missions, Radio and TV Ministry, Seminaries and the many agencies and commissions.

Locally, the finances of the church are sound. The church bonds for construction of the sanctuary were paid off in July 1988. The only indebtedness at this time is less than \$50,000 for the renovation. The current budget is \$110,227 as compared to the church's first budget twenty-seven years ago which was \$6,500 with a weekly requirement of \$125.

Oakdale is still growing. There have been 50 additions in the past year and a half. The membership in July 1988 stands at 365 as compared to forty who attended the first Sunday School at old Oakdale School on January 8, 1961. The 1988 Sunday School enrollment is 237. The church continues to give priority to hiring well-educated, qualified pastors and providing qualified leaders for this vibrant, growing congregation of Christian men and women, boys and girls.

The Lord's Supper is observed regularly, usually quarterly, or at other

times as determined by the pastor and deacons. Worship services are held every Sunday morning and evening with Bible Study-Prayer Services each Wednesday evening as has been the custom since the church's beginning. Oakdale has participated in Bold Mission Thrust which is a goal of the Southern Baptist Convention to witness to every person in the world by the year 2000 through increasing the number of missionaries, giving and prayers.

During the Spring of 1988, Rev. Mark Tilley taught a study "Baptist Ideals: Distinctives of Our Faith" on Wednesday evenings at Bible Study. The informative, inspirational study helped the congregation understand why they are Baptists.

### **What is the Future of Oakdale?"**

What does the future hold for Oakdale? The founders of the church, the members in 1988, and the pastor see a bright future. Spiritual leadership is abundant, and there is adequate space for growth. The people are dedicated and supportive of the work that is before them. The past ten years has seen rapid growth around the church, and future growth and development in the area is inevitable. Most of the people they know say that they are looking for a church where they can be active, and after twenty-seven years Oakdale still offers the opportunity for such an experience. All agree that this church has the potential of being one of the greatest churches in this area. And with the help of God, Oakdale will succeed.



# Appendix

Space does not permit the publication of the names of every person who has served Oakdale for the past twenty-seven years. There are many who have served as Sunday School teachers, youth and children's leaders, nursery workers, music leaders, Woman's Missionary Union leaders and all the other loyal servants who have worked untiringly to make Oakdale the church that it is today. To all of you, we say "thank you". In the remaining space we do want to list some of the people who have filled positions such as pastors, deacons, treasurers, clerks, Sunday School superintendents and WMU directors. And if by some human error, your name has been left out, please accept my humble apology.

mjm

## Pastors

January 5, 1961	April 30, 1961	Thomas L. Reese, Mission Pastor; Pastor, Front Street Baptist Church.
May 1, 1961	December 9, 1964	Joe T. Whitworth
February 14, 1965	January 12, 1969	Latt Beshears
February 1, 1969	June 30, 1969	Norman Joyner, Interim Pastor; Member N.C. Senate
July 1, 1969	February 13, 1977	Norman Joyner, Pastor
March 1, 1977	September 30, 1978	G. Carroll Jordan, Interim Pastor
October 1, 1978	February 1, 1981	John Richard Booth
June 1, 1981	April 30, 1986	Charles Lee Hutchens
November 24, 1986	Present	Mark Allen Tilley

## Deacons Who Have Served from 1961 to 1988

Gary Alexander	Bill Holland	Sam Miller
Ray Anderson	Don Holton	Darryl Moffitt
Earl Baker	Ed Inman	Zeno Proctor
Cecil A. Bell	Boyd Jarvis	Barry Redmond
L.P. Bell	J.V. Johnson	J.A. Roper
Rex Bell	Karl Johnson	Mike Scruggs
Woodrow O. Bell	Steve Johnson	Jerry Somers
Oren Bost	Ray Jones	Tom Stikeleather
Carl Bush	Tommy Laws	J.M. Styers
Reece Childers	Gary Lloyd	Wayne Summers
David Fox	Rhod Lowe	Don Wall
Landis Grose	Steve McCoy	George B. Weaver
Clyde Henderson	Herman Meredith	Clarence White
Gar G. Hendrix	Arlon Miller	Gene Whitesides

## Church Clerks

1961	Gary Mize	1967-87	Elizabeth W. Weaver
1962-64	Selene Holton	1988	Ann Hedgepeth
1965-66	Sally White	1989	Audrey Stikeleather

## Treasurers

Jim A. Mize	Clarence White	Ed Inman
Dan Kay	John Styers	Rhod & Gail Lowe
Boyd Jarvis	Gar G. Hendrix	David Payne

## Sunday School Superintendents

Zeno Proctor	Herman Meredith	George B. Weaver (21 years)
Reece Childers	Gene Whitesides	Jerry Somers

# Footnotes

## Chapter I

- 1 John W. Moore, **History of North Carolina** American Book Company, 1882  
**Illustrated World Encyclopedia**, Vol. 3, 1968, page 560
- 2 J.K. Rouse. **Colonial Churches in North Carolina**. 1961, page 49
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Homer M. Keever. **Iredell-Piedmont County**. Brady Printing Co. 1976, pp 195-196
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.  
John B. Rogers, Jr. **The Lighthouse on the Corner: A History of Western Avenue Baptist Church**. 1976, page 35

## Chapter II

- 1 **Fifty Golden Years-Front Street Baptist Church** (Short history published to commemorate the churches golden anniversary.

## Chapters II-XI

Sources used for these chapters were as follows:

Minutes of Oakdale Baptist Church

Interviews with the following persons:

Rev. Elmer Thomas, Retired Director of Missions, South Yadkin Association

Zeno Proctor, Charter Member of Oakdale

Don Holton, Charter Member of Oakdale

Oren Bost, Charter Member of Oakdale

James Mize, Charter Member of Oakdale

Mrs. Sarah Bell, Oldest Active Member and Charter Member of Oakdale

Roy and Reda Journey, Charter Members of Oakdale

Rev. Mark A. Tilley, Pastor of Oakdale in 1988

Sharon Hendrix Ladd, Second Generation Member

Kim Hendrix Overcash, Second Generation Member







